
NEWS From:

Congressman Mike Honda

FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA

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**Rep. Honda, Major League Baseball Work Together to Deliver
Message of Tolerance During World Series Games***Major League Baseball Joins Bay Area Congressman in National Effort to Promote Unity*

Phoenix, AZ/New York, NY— In addition to the traditional fanfare that accompanies this year's World Series between the Arizona Diamondbacks and the New York Yankees, those in attendance received a different kind of message at the ballpark— one focusing upon the need for racial and religious tolerance in the United States in the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks. During games 1 and 2 in Phoenix and during game 3 in New York each ballpark broadcast the following announcement on the public address system and stadium E-board urging tolerance and respect for diversity:

For more than a century, Major League Baseball has been the National Pastime, uniting and entertaining our great nation both in times of peace and prosperity and in times of crisis. Today, Major League Baseball is also a global game that attracts players and fans from diverse nations and cultures throughout the world, uniting them in a mutual love for the game. In this period of unrest, Major League Baseball would like to remind fans that the United States was built on a foundation of tolerance, understanding and democratic process. By exhibiting racial tolerance in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11th, we will reinforce the ideals of our democracy and show the world that the foundation of our nation will remain strong.

Honda, a Democratic Member of the House from San Jose, CA who was sent to an internment camp for Japanese Americans in the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor, wrote to the Major League Baseball commissioner, Bud Selig, asking for his help in delivering a message of tolerance after learning of attacks against Sikhs, Arab Americans and Muslim Americans in his own Silicon Valley district and across the country.

“As the National Pastime, Baseball and the World Series, have a unique access to the American people,” said Honda. **“I am very pleased that Commissioner Selig, the Diamondbacks and the Yankees have joined with me to promote our most cherished principles of civil liberty and tolerance for diversity during this challenging time in our nation’s history.”**

Honda has learned firsthand about the threats and violence against Arab Americans, Muslims and Sikhs during regular “Interfaith” meetings with community and religious leaders he has convened in San Jose since the attacks of September 11. Honda first conceived of the idea of using professional sporting events as a vehicle for a message of racial and religious tolerance when he learned that “God Bless America” would be sung instead of the traditional “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” during the 7th Inning Stretch at Major League Baseball games.

In making the request to the professional sports commissioners, Honda enlisted the support of House Democratic Leader Richard A. Gephardt and dozens of Republican and Democratic Members of the U.S. House of Representatives who signed their names to a letter on September 21, 2001 to Commissioner Selig and his counterparts at the National Hockey League, Major League Baseball and Major League Soccer. In response to the request, starting on October 8, 2001 during Monday Night Football, the NFL began airing a national spot urging tolerance and respect for diversity that will run throughout the season. Major League Soccer broadcast a similar message on stadium E-boards and public address systems during their playoff season, which recently concluded.